

## Autistry Newsletter - September 11, 2018

Janet Lawson, MFT | September 11, 2018

We are well into the new school semester and I still haven't done a summer wrap-up newsletter. Let's fix that!

In June we launched our first Autistry Comprehensive Adult Program (ACAP) Summer Session. It was five days a week of exercise, vocational training, college prep, and fun. The program tripled in size the first week, reaching our goal of 12 students a full 6 months earlier than planned. All of the summer ACAP students have continued with us into the fall semester.



Each week began with a trip to the Dominican University Conlan Center for a workout session and/or a swim in the pool. The trip itself was exercise and travel training. Students walked from the studio to the San Rafael Transit Center and took the bus to the gym. Many lessons learned along the way: Do not walk along busy streets wearing ear plugs and playing games on your iPhone. Yes, you need either current college ID, ticket, or an active Clipper Card to ride the Marin Transit bus. No, the bus does not wait for you if you are late to the bus stop.



At the gym the students, under the direction of Autistry mentors and DU graduate OT interns, created individualized workout plans and paired up to be Gym Buddies. And there was at least one pool session a week where the students could improve their swimming skills and review water safety. The Conlan also provided a great basketball court, outdoor soccer fields, and a running track – we made use of them all.

Back at the studio, we honed our vocational skills with several different projects. Matt Glenwright, Autistry Program Director for Vocational Training, taught shop skills using the laser cutter, ShopBot, bandsaw, and other woodworking tools. Students also used graphic and CAD software to create unique designs. Lots of measuring, figuring, and cutting went on this summer. We were happy to donate three sets of original equine-themed bamboo coasters to a raffle supporting Square Peg Foundation. And, we delivered the Art Boxes to Oak Hill School.



Wednesday's Cooking with Gabrielle was a huge hit. Each week featured a student's favorite family recipe allowing us to enjoy new tastes: chana masala, homemade pesto, Mason Family cranberry sauce, creamy vegan one-pot pasta, and many more tasty dishes. They also experimented with exotic spices and strange, tongue-tickling textures.

In the spirit of keeping our brains active and preparing for fall college classes we spent many hours doing academic basics: reading writing, and arithmetic. Gabrielle and Sara prepared special learning packets for each of the students to brush up on Math and English skills. When classes started in late August the Autistry students were ready.



And, of course, there were the fabulous Friday excursions with Sara Gardner. Just a few of the places they visited: San Francisco Exploratorium, Point Reyes National Seashore, Japanese Tea Garden, Square Peg Foundation horse farm, SF zoo, and Jack London State Park. These excursion are not only fun but also practice travel skills and offer the opportunity to explore our community.



The Core Build Stuff Workshops remain the heart of Autistry. In these weekly 4-hour workshops amazing projects are being created. This summer Edward finished his plushie character, Dashi from Octonauts. He is now working on a very cool puppet. Danielle completed her award-winning multi-media piece, Peek-a-Boo – Under the Sea, several animated films are underway, and many 3D printed projects happened.



This fall we celebrate 10 Years of Autistry Build Stuff Workshops! We offered our first workshop in September 2008 and we have added new workshops and new services every year. Please consider a donation to help us continue to expand Autistry for another 10 years!